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APPROACHING MATERNITY

BY

JOHN ROSS PANCOAST, M.D.

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Columbia University
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PREFACE

I have endeavored in this work, to avoid the use of any technical terms that would only confuse my readers, and it has been my effort to couch my ideas in language that could readily be understood by any woman of ordinary intelligence.

The indications of pregnancy are as follows:

1. Cessation of the menses.
2. Enlargement of the breasts.
3. Morning nausea.
4. Sinking and then protruding of navel.
5. Quickening; or moving of child in the womb.

It is a difficult matter to calculate accurately, the exact day on which a pregnant woman will be confined. It is usual to figure that two hundred and eighty days from the cessation of the last menstruation, the event will take place, but many a husband who has been hurriedly called and sent for the physician and nurse, two or three weeks before the birth was due, will testify to the inaccuracy of this uncertain rule.

However, this is as close a calculation as we can make as yet.

The development of the X-rays may put us upon a more certain basis for calculation.

It would be well for every prospective mother to prepare for the birth of her child in two hundred and fifty days. Have your nurse engaged well ahead. Let her come to your house occasionally and get used to the rooms she is to use. This will save many wasted minutes when the birth occurs.

Starting with the assumption that beyond question, pregnancy exists, I have endeavored to give practical and helpful hints and advice, upon the most important points to be observed.

The moment a woman is convinced that she is to become a mother, she should at once consult a reliable physician and place herself as much as possible in his hands. His experience, counsel, and advice will benefit and aid her, beyond words, in her coming ordeal.

JOHN ROSS PANCOAST, M.D.

CHAPTER I.

CLOTHING.

Perhaps the most important rule to be observed by the prospective mother is to avoid any and all garments that would produce any pressure or constriction upon the breasts or waist.

The expansion of the uterus, as the *fœtus*, or unborn child, gradually increases in size, makes demands upon the already well-filled space of the woman's body, and anything that would hamper or restrict this expansion is likely to prove injurious, not only to the mother but also to the child.

CORSETS.

Wear corsets as seldom as possible. For a short time after conception takes place, the young wife cannot bring herself to give up all social enjoyments in preparation for her holy motherhood, and during the early part of her pregnancy she may wear corsets if they are worn loosely. Be sure, however, from the first, that there is ample room for the breasts and body around the waist.

After the third month of pregnancy they should not be worn at all, in my opinion. By that time social enjoyments will have begun

to assume a smaller importance and appearances will not have to be observed so closely.

A most excellent substitute for the corset can be found in a waist made of a heavy drilling, to be laced back and front, that its size may be increased as nature demands it. This waist, properly made, will give all the support needed to the breasts and body without hampering in the least freedom of growth and motion.

GARTERS.

Have your hose supporters made to suspend from the before-mentioned waist to the stocking, and do not wear the ordinary band garters around the leg. They serve to impede, in a small measure, the circulation of the blood, and at this period a free circulation is desirable and important. There is some restriction caused by the expansion of the uterus among the other organs, and anything tending to increase this should be avoided, or varicose veins might be the result.

SKIRTS.

It is essential that as light skirts as can be worn, without danger of cold, should be a part of the outfit of the prospective mother. Heavy skirts are at any time a menace to a woman's health, but at this time any continued dragging or pressure upon the waist and hips assumes an even more serious aspect. If the weather be cold, a skirt of light flannel, which will give warmth without weight, will be found to be best for house wear.

For wear out doors, the best thing I have found was a flannel underskirt reaching to the shoe-tops, with a light-weight, dark overskirt. Here, again, warmth was secured without weight.

In mild weather it is a very easy matter to do away with all weight, and then it is only necessary to have the flannel skirt in case of a sudden change to a lower temperature.

Whenever possible, all skirts should be suspended from the shoulders. This may seem a trifle arbitrary and difficult of accomplishment in some cases, but I always plead for it with my patients, and never has it been regretted when tried.

A young wife, who had been married less than three months, sent for me on one occasion to have me examine her to see if she were really pregnant. Two menstrual periods had passed; her morning sickness had commenced, and my examination developed the fact that she was undoubtedly to become a mother. She was slender and undeveloped, and I readily foresaw a very painful delivery unless immediate steps were taken to prepare her for the ordeal. She willingly assented to follow the course of baths, exercise, food, rest and mental preparation I prescribed, but demurred at the radical changes in her wearing apparel.

The result was that in two months she was in an alarming condition. The case was stated plainly to her husband, who succeeded in convincing her that the fault lay at her own door. He purchased for her a suit of bloomers! The trousers were suspended from straps running over her shoulders, and no corsets were worn under the blouse waist. They moved temporarily to a healthy mountainous country, where the prospective mother, attired in her hideous costume, followed to the letter her prescribed programme, including a long walk every day, when the weather permitted.

A few days before the expected time she gave birth, with but three hours' labor, to a strong, healthy child. She would never have lived through the event had she withstood the entreaties of her husband and her physician.

SHOES.

For out-door wear a broad-toed extension sole boot should be worn, that the exercise so necessary at this time may be pleasant and unhampered.

For house wear roomy shoes with low heels and broad toes are best, as by their use an even tread is secured.

NIGHT WEAR.

For cold weather, it is essential that the night-dress be of a warm, light material, that the body be protected from draughts, and even the small chill that sometimes is felt when first getting into bed and between cold sheets. A soft outing flannel is the best material for this purpose, as it answers all requirements and can be readily washed.

FOR OUT-DOOR WEAR.

Walking during the period just before maternity being of such great moment, the question of apparel for outside wear is one that must be considered from the two points of appearance and healthfulness.

A combination of garments that will not be unsightly and will yet be constructed upon principles not violating the rules regarding pressure and constriction must be sought for and obtained.

Remembering the fundamental principles of keeping all pressure from the waist and breasts, and hanging no garments of weight directly from the waist, will serve to suggest to all women an outdoor costume that will render a reasonable walk in good weather an invigorator of no mean power.

Dress in dark colors ; this will render less conspicuous the increase in size and irregularity of outline.

In conclusion, think more of the health and less of appearances.

CHAPTER II.

FOOD.

There are two important considerations to be taken into account when we come to the question, "What shall the prospective mother eat?"

These are :

First.—What food will best nourish herself and her unborn child?

Second.—What food will put her body in best condition to undergo child-bearing with least anguish and risk to her health?

All of the numerous plans devised by heedless people to retard the bony development of the unborn child, and thus render delivery easier and less painful, are to be condemned and forbidden.

Such a course might render the life of a helpless, unborn child one of perpetual crippledom, and to save a mother a few hours' pain a child might be doomed to *years* of untold agony of body and spirit.

A patient of mine, at the time of her first confinement, lived entirely upon apples, oranges, grapes, potatoes, corn starch and oatmeal. She lost strength, and when I was called in I ordered

meat once a day and beef tea three times a day, with a special tonic to build up tissue.

When her child was born she was in labor for eighteen hours, suffering frightfully throughout this time ; and the child ! It never moved. It looked like nothing so much as a large mass of discolored dough.

I never allowed that poor young wife to see it. In her weakened condition it would have killed her.

Four weeks later she confided to me that she had disobeyed my instructions ; had never taken any meat or tonic, and but little of the beef tea—and all to escape a few hours of pain, which was unquestionably increased by her weakened condition.

The proper system to follow is one that will render most healthy the entire system, keep the digestive apparatus clear and not retard the natural growth of the fœtus.

Avoid false stimulants. Too much meat will over-stimulate a woman at this time.

Avoid fat and grease. They serve only to clog the digestion and overheat the blood.

EGGS.

There is one element lacking in eggs that is much needed by the prospective mother. That is starch. If some other food rich in starch, like rice, for instance, be used in conjunction with eggs, a very desirable and strengthening dish is the result.

Eggs can be used in any of the many ways they can be cooked, excepting fried. They must be avoided.

MEATS.

Beef is by far the best meat for the prospective mother. It must be tender and lean and cooked carefully. Next to beef, in value, is poultry. It should be fresh and tender, and prepared without fat or grease.

Meat once a day will benefit and strengthen. Unless stimulation is needed, I would advise against the more frequent indulgence after the third month of pregnancy.

VEGETABLES.

At this period in a woman's life she must carefully refrain from eating any vegetables that cause indigestion.

Some women cannot eat cabbage, for instance. Others find that onions cause gastric disturbance.

The vegetables that are most palatable and most easily digested should be indulged in freely.

If tomatoes, potatoes, corn, peas and beans have never caused indigestion, I should advise their constant use. They are wholesome, strengthening and easily assimilated.

SWEETS.

The expectant mother may crave certain puddings or flavors of a sweet nature.

As pies and rich pastry of any sort are really injurious, plainly made dishes of rice, sago, tapioca or bread are most excellent food; and flavored with fruit flavors, and varied with eggs, they are very palatable and nourishing.

DRINKS.

For a hot drink, my first choice is cocoa, well prepared and not too rich.

For a cooling drink, lemonade made from fresh lemons and a pure mineral water, sweetened slightly and well shaken with the white of an egg, cannot be equaled.

Drink as little tea and coffee as possible. Sometimes, if slightly chilled, a cup of hot tea is beneficial, but regular indulgence can do some harm that may as well be avoided.

Milk must not be taken too freely. It does not digest readily with some people, and prepared milk is preferable in such a case.

VARIETY.

It might be well to vary, as much as possible, the ways of cooking the articles of food to be eaten by the expectant mother.

The number is reduced so much from the large choice allowed her under ordinary conditions that, unless the style and flavoring are varied, the diet will become tiresome, and inability to eat enough food will result.

Constipation usually accompanies pregnancy, but if a course of proper food be followed, and results be carefully watched, this can be greatly relieved.

If there is a particular craving for some explicit food, if that food be wholesome and digestible, it is best to gratify the desire, as in most instances nature is demanding some of the elements contained in the coveted article.

If strong cravings for some unusual food product are felt, the physician should be consulted, and some simple prescription can be had that will contain in solution the desired element.

Diet is most important, for the nourishment of the unborn child and for the proper preparation and sustenance of the mother.

SICK STOMACH.

When there exists a great inability to retain the food eaten upon the stomach, it will be found to be of great assistance if small quantities of liquid nourishment are taken at frequent intervals.

Perhaps at first even this will be rejected, but if persisted in success will be attained, and the digestive apparatus can be induced to return to a normal state.

Beef tea, chicken broth or prepared milk are among the best forms of liquid nourishment for use at this time.

CHAPTER III.

EXERCISE.

It is a difficult matter to prescribe any one set form of exercise that will be beneficial to the entire race of women. They are constituted so differently; they have led such different lives, and have been subjected to such different trials and physical sicknesses, as to make it impossible to lay down a form of exercise that would be beneficial to each and all of them.

This is one point, particularly, about which the family physician should be consulted. He will know the peculiarities of the case, and will understand the weaknesses that must be treated with delicacy. He will know how much exercise and what kind is best adapted to the patient.

There are a number of precautions which must be carefully noted in this connection; perhaps the most important of which is, that during the time that menstruation would have taken place had the prospective mother not been pregnant, no exercise of any kind must be indulged in.

This is a matter of great importance. Neglect of this rule has, in a number of instances, caused the death of both mother and

child ; and I cannot lay too great stress upon the necessity of great quiet and extra rest during this time.

Exercise is one of the easiest and surest means of lessening the pain and weariness of the coming labor, and by preparing the muscles of the body that are to be called upon for a supreme effort, the pain and anguish necessarily attendant upon this epoch are greatly reduced.

A number of muscles that in the ordinary life of a woman are at rest entirely are called upon at this time to undergo a great strain, and are used in a way entirely different from anything that they have been accustomed to.

The importance of getting these muscles into proper shape cannot be over-estimated.

The exercise must be begun early in the period of gestation, and it must be taken systematically and lightly at first and increased as it becomes easier of accomplishment. The moment there is any fatigue felt rest must be taken at once, and do not begin any further exercise until there is a slight desire for it.

WALKING.

Perhaps in the list of available exercise there is no one that, under limited restrictions, can be made more valuable than walking.

There are a few rules that must be observed in connection with it to derive therefrom the greatest benefit; but these are of a minor nature.

Some women who have suffered from some disease of the uterus are unable to walk without great discomfort. In such a case, the

physician's advice must be had, and if, in his opinion, walking would be injurious, some other form of exercise must be adopted.

It is essential in walking at this time that some objective point should be aimed for. Aimless wandering around would only serve to annoy and bore a prospective mother, whereas a brisk walk, taken with the idea of reaching some place or point, would brighten her mind and invigorate her body.

The body should be so carried that the lungs will be given a full chance to expand. The shoulders should be held well back, and the steps should be taken in a vigorous manner and with great firmness, care being taken not to jar the system by too heavy walking upon the heels.

BREATHING.

This subject is one which calls but for brief comment; but it is one of great importance.

A woman in this condition has need of more oxygen than under ordinary circumstances, for the reason that the blood of her unborn child is to be purified as well as her own, and her entire lung power must be exercised to furnish the requisite amount to successfully supply the needs of both.

This is one of the reasons why the wearing of corsets is at this time a drawback. A woman cannot breathe freely, and to as great an extent, hampered by this garment, as if her body was given full play, free from confines.

Five or ten minutes spent every morning and afternoon in the drawing in of deep breaths through the nose will be time well

spent. In this way, that part of the lungs that had not been called into play under former conditions will be used and developed, and an immediate effect will be noticeable.

CLIMBING STAIRS.

A number of physicians of my acquaintance, have in several instances, recommended to women whom they considered in good physical condition, the exercise to be obtained from walking up and down stairs, as it is claimed this will strengthen the muscles at the sides of the waist. While it is a matter of great importance that these muscles should be strengthened, and while the development of these muscles is something that will greatly add to the ease of the coming trial, I have always felt that it was a subject that required some consideration before being indiscriminately prescribed to many women.

There is great danger of its proving too great a tax and strain, unless the woman be of a very strong physical development. I would advise that before this exercise be taken regularly, the family physician be consulted and fully informed as to the after effects.

GENERAL EXERCISE.

There are a number of movements of the legs, arms and body which can be used to great advantage in the development of the muscles, which are so soon to be called upon. Any movement that calls into play the abdominal muscles and those at the sides of the waist, will be beneficial.

Avoid standing as much as possible. This is very tiresome and produces a mental state, the effect of which is anything but helpful.

When sitting down, if possible, stretch the body out so that perfect relaxation is obtained. In this way a great deal of rest can be obtained.

If at first the result of the new forms of exercise is found to be one of weariness, it has been my experience that a cessation of all exercise for a day or two will be very helpful. If it be possible, a drive at this time in the open air, bringing a change of scene without any fatigue, will result in much good, and the exercise will be taken up with more zest and interest.

MASSAGE.

If it is possible to obtain, once a week, good massage treatment, unless prohibited by a physician, this will be found very beneficial to almost every patient.

It is a most agreeable treatment, and the feeling of invigoration produced by it will almost invariably result in great good. The body is freshened; the muscles are softened without becoming flabby, and unless the expectant mother experiences a feeling of enervation, it will have a good effect.

In conclusion, I cannot impress too deeply the importance of exercise at this time.

It must be pursued systematically, and at the time of the birth of the child the effects will make themselves shown in a manner that will amply repay all the time and trouble taken.

CHAPTER IV.

REST.

There are many times during the period of gestation when a woman feels a sense of languor and weariness.

This is particularly apt to be the case at the time when, if she had not been pregnant, menstruation would have taken place.

I have dwelt upon the necessity for absolute rest at this time, and can only say in addition, that much pain and sickness or suffering can be prevented if, at the slightest signal of weariness, rest is taken.

Dress comfortably and lie down until all sensation of fatigue is gone.

Be careful that you are not in a draught and that the feet are sufficiently covered to give that sense of warmth that is always so delicious.

If there is the smallest feeling of coldness in the feet, retain the stockings, remove the shoes, and place a hot-water bag under the feet.

A tendency to fidgeting or nervousness can be overcome by reading something mildly interesting that will take the mind away from thoughts of physical discomfort.

It is better, for the obtaining of complete rest, that the reading should be dispensed with as soon as quietude of mind and body is reached, that the eyes and brain may also share in the relaxation.

Exclude from the room in which rest is taken all light, that sleep may be induced.

The best time to rest is immediately after fifteen or twenty minutes of proper exercise, as at that time the muscles and bodily functions appreciate particularly a cessation of labor, and the work of building up and recuperating goes on to great advantage.

If there is a tendency toward sleeplessness at night, the midday nap should be carefully cultivated, as very often lack of rest will conduce toward inability to sleep at night.

If, during the day, five or ten minutes can be secured, great benefit can be derived by complete relaxation of the body and mind.

Throw yourself down on the bed and rest every faculty and muscle, and your sleep that night will be fresher and sweeter for it.

SLEEP.

A multi-millionaire once said to me that he was happier when he was poor than since the time he had acquired a great fortune, as his nights in the former years had been spent in profound slumber, whereas they were spent later in "*planning*."

"Planning for what?" I asked him. "You have everything money will buy."

"Planning for those things money will not buy," he answered, with a smile.

Perfect sleep can be had only when mind and body are at ease. A restless mind will produce troubled dreams. A suffering body will procure broken slumber.

Cultivate ease of mind and ease of body, and your repose will be healthful and profound.

If, when you retire at night, there is a tendency toward sleeplessness, something is wrong.

Study carefully your feelings. Discover whether you are too warm or too cold. Try another position. Very often the increase in size of the abdomen will render necessary some support for the additional weight. A pillow or bandage will answer.

If the evening can be spent comfortably and quietly without excitement, and the afternoon nap of at least one hour has been had, the best time to retire for the night is ten o'clock.

Sleep alone, when possible, but have within call your husband or some one whose presence is grateful to you, in case of need.

VENTILATION.

The healthiest woman in the world could be reduced to a pitiable state of ill health if she were obliged to sleep in a room improperly ventilated.

When we think that the air we breathe is inhaled for the sole purpose of purifying the blood, we can appreciate how important and vital it is that this air should be fresh and pure.

Uncontaminated air contains that necessary element, oxygen, without which we cannot live, and the expectant mother must inhale sufficient to purify, not only her own blood, but that of her unborn child also.

Therefore, the sleeping room must be ventilated in such a way as to insure a never-ceasing flow of pure air without creating a draught.

There are many ways of attaining this end, all of which are so simple that they need not be mentioned in detail.

Have a thermometer in the bed-room, and endeavor to maintain a temperature that will never go below fifty-five degrees Fahrenheit during the night; and throughout the day sixty-five to seventy degrees should be the figures between which the thermometer should range.

It is very much better that no lights should be kept burning in the bed-room during the night.

Disagreeable odors are produced, and oxygen is consumed that should be saved for slumbering humanity.

If, for any reason, a light should be needed suddenly during the night, one should be kept burning in an adjoining hall or room where it could be reached quickly in case of necessity.

All the rest that can be obtained will serve to strengthen the body for the coming trial, and the importance of it cannot be over-estimated.

CHAPTER V.

BATHING.

The best housekeeper I have ever known was a lady of ample means, who fretted herself so much over the condition of her furniture and wall-paper, that she had no time left in which to keep her own body clean.

Her house was immaculate from cellar to roof. It was swept from top to bottom every day, and immediately every room was dusted and put to rights.

One day she personally superintended the cleaning of the cellar in her house, and immediately afterward sat down to luncheon with a huge smut of dust upon the side of her nose!

Furniture and other household belongings will stand uncleanness much better than the human body, and cleanliness is even more essential during the time just preceding childbirth than under ordinary conditions.

The skin must be kept clear and in a vigorous, healthy condition, that all the impurities that exude through the countless pores may have unobstructed exit.

There are lots of men who do not wash their bodies more than once a month who would discharge their coachmen if the coats of their horses did not shine like satin.

I particularly favor for the expectant mother a tepid sponge bath for the morning, and just before retiring for the night a warm sitz bath.

If either of these is followed by any ill effects, the frequency of them must be moderated.

Do not take the sitz bath every night if after you have gone to bed there is a sense of wakefulness or fatigue.

It should not be too warm at any time, as very heated water has a tendency to affect materially the unborn child.

I have known of many instances where a shocking miscarriage has been caused by the too frequent application of a very warm bath.

A feeling of buoyancy and exhilaration should follow close upon the bath. The blood should seem to run more freely, and a warm glow should be felt over all the body.

If none of these symptoms are present, and instead there is a feeling of depression and languor, something is radically wrong, and moderation in bathing must be observed temporarily.

A good substitute for the baths before mentioned can be found in a hard, brisk rubbing of the entire body with a flesh-brush or coarse Turkish towel.

This rubbing invigorates the skin, opens the pores, and brings the blood to the surface, thereby benefitting the circulation and cleansing the skin of many impurities.

While bathing the entire body at this time, by getting into a bath-tub filled with water, might not result in serious harm, it is

better to avoid the risk of cold or enervation and confine the bathing to the tepid sponge bath in the morning and the sitz bath at night.

The chances of taking cold can be materially lessened by sponging the body with water that is as cold as feels comfortable to the skin.

Immediately after this sponging, a brisk, hard rubbing with a coarse towel should be indulged in, this serving to restore the circulation and warm the surface of the body.

A cupful of sea salt dissolved in the water adds to the stimulating power and is beneficial to the skin.

FOOT BATHS.

A cold foot bath is the best remedy for cold feet that has been discovered.

Before immersing the feet in the tub of cold water they should be rubbed briskly with a coarse towel or flesh brush.

Then dip one foot in the water, keeping it there for about ten seconds. On withdrawing it rub it vigorously until dry, after which wrap it up in the towel and treat the other foot in like manner.

Repeat this until each foot has been dipped and rubbed thoroughly dry at least three times.

Upon getting into bed, if there is the slightest feeling of coldness in the feet, a pillow laid across them will serve to restore them to a pleasing warmth.

A brisk rubbing with the hands, of a few drops of alcohol upon the soles, will often stimulate the circulation.

CAUTION.

At the time when under ordinary conditions menstruation would have occurred the tepid sponge bath alone should be used.

For three or four days it is wise to dispense with the sitz bath, and avoid all risks.

The sponge bath is perfectly cleansing, and offers so little chance of bringing on undesired effects that it can be continued at this time without fear.

Perfect cleanliness will result in greatly aiding to bring the prospective mother to a perfect condition for the coming event.

Every day after the sponge bath a thorough rubbing of the abdomen with olive oil will serve to soften the skin and render more pliable the muscles that must relax most at the time of delivery.

This treatment should also be given in moderation to the breasts and nipples, care being taken to rub very gently.

CHAPTER VI.

STATE OF MIND.

While the whole operation of the reproduction of mankind is a thing of great mystery and incomprehensibility to the human mind, there is nothing in the physical part of it so deeply wonderful and hard to understand as the relation that exists between the mind of the prospective mother and the forming disposition and character of the unborn child.

From a materialistic point of view, it is difficult for us to comprehend how impressions made upon the mentality of a pregnant woman can be conveyed through physical channels to the growing fœtus she is carrying; but that this is the case is established beyond doubt.

Women, who for any cause allow themselves, at this period of their existence, to worry or become nervous, are apt to see reflected in their children disagreeable traits of disposition and temperament.

It is very important, therefore, that a great deal of care should be exercised and trouble taken to engage the mind of the prospective mother in pursuits of a pleasing and intellectual character, that the child may have a good disposition and a desire for the cultivation of the mind.

Anything of an unpleasant or irritating nature should be studi-

ously avoided, and self-control and equable calmness of mind and body sought after.

Revoltng sights and alarming experiences must be prevented to as great an extent as possible.

One of my patients, who was badly frightened by a harmless mouse in the fourth month of her pregnancy, gave birth to a child which bore upon the left cheek the vivid burning outline of one of those animals.

PRECAUTIONS.

It is unlikely that any physician of established practice has gone through his career without being requested a number of times to prescribe something to relieve a woman who has missed one menstruation and does not desire a child.

Different doctors regard this request differently. Some hold that it is a moral wrong to prevent the birth of a child; others, that in the first two months there is no specific life, and if a woman is in good physical condition she can bear very well the results of mild treatment in this direction.

I have always refused to give any medicine that would bring on the desired flow, doing what I considered my duty in the matter.

But—and here lies the application to our present chapter—if relief has been sought and not obtained, there must be no fretting or worrying over the prospect of an addition to the family circle. It can do no good, and will do some harm beyond question.

It would be as rare and unusual for a happy, healthy child to be born of a mother who had tried in every way to “get rid of it” and failed, as would be the birth to black parents of white offspring!

If matters assume the shape that an unwelcome child is to be born, it must be looked at philosophically and taken calmly, with the idea always uppermost that, if it is inevitable, the child shall be one to be proud of and loved.

When a child is desired, how different everything looks!

All is preparation and prospect for the coming stranger, who is to be a ruler in the blessed household.

Very often the birth of a child is prevented that the events of the next few years would have rendered a most welcome addition to the family.

The systematic preparation of the physical life of a woman will do so much toward reducing the pain of labor and confinement that a woman may look forward to her delivery as a great boon and blessing.

As a rule, labor is short and the pain is never unbearable or torturing, except in rare instances where indiscretions have been committed; and the physician in charge can and does do much to alleviate the suffering, even using an anæsthetic when necessary.

A great many young wives express the fear that they will die in labor, but statistics prove the percentage to be very small.

Having carefully prepared body and mind for the coming motherhood, a woman should approach it with calmness and unflinching courage, trusting herself to the hands of her physician and nurse.

THE HUSBAND.

A man can never do enough for the wife who is shortly to bear him a child.

There is much he can do to lighten and brighten this time of waiting and preparation.

Little attentions and courtesies that show his appreciation of her condition ; small inexpensive presents for herself or the coming child ; an interest in every symptom that bespeaks the approach of the event ; comfort when depression sets in, and sympathy at all times. These all mean a great deal to the prospective mother.

She should never hear bad news or the relation of worrisome events from her husband's lips ; but the telling of interesting happenings or bright occurrences will lighten her spirits and drive away care.

Until a woman feels that her appearance is too unsightly, light amusements and theatrical performances that are not too emotional will be found beneficial. Music particularly should be heard on every possible occasion, and if there is no music in the home, an evening could not be spent to better advantage than at a good concert that does not overtax the nerves of the prospective mother.

Last, but not least :

A man once told me that the easiest delivery his wife had ever had took place two days sooner than expected and one day after he had had a connection with her !

Thank Heaven, there are not many such brutes as this ! What really took place was a miscarriage in my opinion, superinduced by coition.

That it was not troublesome was a piece of good luck, and must have been the result of the woman's excellent condition.

It is better that during the entire pregnancy sexual intercourse should be abstained from.

During coition the uterus is subjected to great disturbance; congestion of many of the parts follows, and the effect upon the nerves is of a harmful nature.

The entire vital energy of the woman is needed and should be saved for the coming event, and a husband should practice self-control and forego selfish indulgence at this time.

Strive rather to elevate and develop the intellectual side of the woman, and if her mind is kept occupied upon helpful, entertaining subjects, the good result will show later on.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BIRTH.

If, as has been advised, the physician and nurse have been engaged early in the pregnancy, as the time of birth approaches, the greater part of the preparation can be made without much trouble and worriment.

I have endeavored to offer many words of advice that would make unnecessary many visits from the doctor; but his counsel should be sought should any serious complication arise.

As the time of confinement draws near, the breasts and nipples need special attention. In every case where it can be done, the child must nurse from the breast rather than from a bottle, and occasionally, if these parts have been neglected, great soreness and pain will follow.

A little olive or sweet oil rubbed gently upon the nipples twice a day, after sponging with tepid water, will be found beneficial. In the month just preceding the expected birth, at least once a day, bathe these parts with a weak solution of alcohol in which a piece of alum the size of a filbert has been dissolved.

Keep up the exercise taken as long as it can be accomplished without inconvenience; and when walking becomes a matter of

difficulty, the other prescribed forms can be followed, the leg movements in bed being very useful at this time.

Endeavor to secure a nurse who will be pleasing to you and amenable to the desires of your doctor.

Ignorance or ugliness of temper on her part might add woefully to the discomfort of the patient; whereas, on the other hand, competence, willingness, and a sunny disposition will brighten and help the mother and child.

LABOR.

As the date, that under ordinary conditions would have been the tenth menstrual period, approaches, the womb containing the child will sink slightly in the pelvis, and the discharge from the vagina will contain small quantities of blood.

When labor first begins, the pains will be short and sharp, much like a cramp, with quite long stretches of time between them.

Everything should then be gotten ready and the doctor advised.

If the hand be placed upon the abdomen just over the womb, the contractions and relaxations can be felt during these pains.

The amniotic sac, in which the unborn child has up to this period been floating, is likely to break at this time, and preparations should be made to prevent the rush of liquid from saturating the clothing.

The mouth of the womb is opening, the sac is broken, and the child will shortly descend into the world.

The pains will now increase in frequency, and there is a small sense of fatigue between the spasms.

The nurse will now be able to render great assistance in aiding the birth by cheering counsel and helping hands, and her experience will enable her to suggest many reliefs.

THE BIRTH.

In most cases the child will be born without the actual assistance of the doctor; but for the ease of mind of the mother, and to avoid unnecessary risks, it is preferable that he should be on hand as soon as possible after the labor pains commence. Especially is this the case when it is the first child.

If the labor should be short and the birth occur before the doctor arrives, the nurse must see that the cord is free and that the child is warmly covered and with its body and head in such position that it can breathe freely.

When the pulsing in the cord has ceased, and the child has cried vigorously, if the nurse is capable, she may sever the cord after making the necessary bindings upon it.

This is a doctor's work, and he should be on hand if it is possible.

The after-birth soon follows, and the mother has before her now only recuperation and convalescence.

Great care and caution must be exercised at this stage. Perfect quiet and all the rest obtainable are needed.

The husband may enter the room, but his stay should be short and a visit of sympathy and consolation only.

The mother must make no exertion; must talk very little, and must get all the sleep she can.

The doctor must have absolute control of the lying-in room, and the rules laid down by him must be followed to the letter.

For this reason it is very often advisable to allow the doctor to secure the nurse, that perfect harmony and understanding may exist between them.

I remember on one occasion, in the third year of my practice, I was suddenly called in a confinement case that had been in the hands of a celebrated physician, who was suddenly stricken with paralysis. I was young and beardless, and the nurse, who was old and experienced, regarded me with much contempt.

My orders were not always obeyed, because, as she said, "Dr. Blank never did it that way."

She annoyed me very much, and on the third day I was obliged to ask for her dismissal.

The request was granted, and things went on much better.

Later, knowing her to be competent, I recommended her to one of my own patients, and she was one of the most tractable, obedient and willing nurses I have ever known.

A few hours after birth, if the mother feels like it, the child may be given its first nursing, and if the supply of milk be ample, there is nothing on which it will thrive so well as mother's milk.

CONCLUSION.

Beyond this point all must be entrusted to the physician and the nurse.

Maternity has come !

All the preparation and care have had their good effect, and another healthy human being is the result.

By the exercise of care, with good nursing, proper food, plenty of rest, absolute cleanliness and attention to all the little details, a slow, sure convalescence will be insured and the greatest event in a woman's life becomes a matter of history.

If my advice and counsel will help one woman to bring into the world, with more ease, a healthier, better child, I will be repaid.

God bless our mothers !

THE END.



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